

EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER

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MEMBERS OF THE BOARD WHICH IS DEVISING

A PLAN TO SUPPLANT STEAM IN THESE

MERCHANT CARRIERS WITH GASOLINE POWER.

It is estimated that by using Diesel

engines increased cargo space can be

obtained, possibly higher speed and

assuredly marked economies in fuel

expenditures. The assumed cost of

reconditioning has already been brought

to a relatively low figure, and it is said

that, after consistent service of the ships

has been instituted, the outlay for trans-

forming them can be made good.

Approximately 600 ships of the board

are believed to be suitable for the change

of motive power. It is assumed that

they will then be marketable and that

the board will be relieved at last of one

of its most pressing burdens.

A preliminary survey already sug-

gests that motorships on the sea may

eventually effect a revolution compar-

able with that achieved by motor vehicles

on land.

THE CITY DEBT MIDDLE

AND A POSSIBLE WAY OUT

Difference of Opinion About the Law

Could Be Removed by Clarify-

ing Legislation

CITIZENS who have been looking for-

ward to a continuation by the city of

its repaving program and builders who

cannot sell their houses in new

streets unless the sewers and water

mains are laid and the roadway is made

passable are wondering what all this

talk about the inability of the munici-

pality to borrow money next year means.

Controller Hadley reported a few

weeks ago that there was a margin of

\$2,000,000 between the city debt and

the limit on the debt fixed by the Con-

stitution. This was apparently ample

for a immediate needs.

City Solicitor Smyth, however, has

taken issue with his opinion that the cost

of the sewerage system covered by the

State Department of Health, the

cost of the Delaware River bridge and

other miscellaneous items, amounting

to \$10,000,000, leave a margin of

only \$1,000,000.

Mr. Controller's figure was made

on the basis of the City Solicitor's

estimate of that of a layman. Now, who

is right?

Even if it shall appear that the Con-

troller is right, it will be difficult, if not

impossible, to borrow any large sums

next year until the courts have decided

that the city has the legal power to

issue bonds. Pending public

improvements are tied up in a lawsuit.

Whether may be right, it is exceed-

ingly unfortunate that the difference of

opinion now exists. It puts the city in

the awkward position of a man who has

been awarded a verdict of \$10,000,000,

but makes up on Monday to discover

that they may be only \$1,000,000.

The difference has arisen over the

question of the law. The City Solicitor

insists that the total cost of the sewer-

age system and of the new bridge

must be reckoned as an existing debt,

even though the bonds have not

been issued and may not be issued for

some years. The improvements are

made under an act of the State

Department of Health, and the State

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DAY THAT JAPAN WOULD PROCEED WITH HER

NAVAL REORGANIZATION, ACCORDING TO

THE SPIRIT OF THE WASHINGTON PACTS. SHOULD

THEY BE REPUTED IN PARIS OR ROME

OR BOTH CAPITALS, THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

IS HOPING TO EFFECT A TRIPARTITE

AGREEMENT ON ARMS LIMITATIONS WITH THE

UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN.

If this is wily Orientalism, it is

assuredly not of the type against which

Hiram Johnson was wont to thunder.

WORK FOR PRISONERS

THERE seems to be a wholesome inter-

est just now in the subject of prison

reform. This is indicated by the Grand

Jury inquiry into the conditions that

prevail in the Holmesburg jail following

exposures in this newspaper; by the

appointment by the Common Pleas

Judges of this county of a committee to

confer with the Judges of Montgomery,

Delaware, Bucks and Chester Counties

on the enforcement of the act of 1919

providing for the establishment of farms

for the employment of prisoners in the

county jails, and by the resignation of

E. J. Lafferty from the State Depart-

ment of Welfare to give his whole time

to creating sentiment in favor of legis-

lation providing work for inmates of the

penitentiaries.

It is not necessary to argue that work

should be provided for the prisoners.

Confinement of men and women in idleness

is admittedly demoralizing. But for

reasons into which it is not necessary

to go, it has been impossible to get the

Legislature to pass the laws necessary

to provide work for the inmates of the

penitentiaries. Mr. Lafferty says that

fully 60 per cent of the convicts are idle.

A few petty industries give employment

to 15 per cent and another 15 per cent

are employed in various tasks connected

with the maintenance of the peniten-

tiaries.

Now that attention has been attracted

to the subject, it ought to be possible to

get the necessary legislation in Harris-

burg not only to provide labor for the

unfortunates, but also to bring about the

removal of the convicts from the Kas-

ern Penitentiary to a penitentiary in the

own country where they can be

employed at healthful occupations.

MR. WILSON'S BIRTHDAY

WOODROW WILSON IS SIXTY-SIX

YEARS OLD TODAY, AND PERSISTENT

REPORTS INDICATE THAT HIS HEALTH IS

STEADILY IMPROVING. THE FUND NECESSARY

FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WILSON

FOUNDATION HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY COMPLETED.

There are prophets in Washington who

are saying today that the former President

will probably be a dominating influence

in his party in 1924.

What would be the effect of Mr. Wil-

son's return to politics? For